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**LIVESTOCK SLAUGHTER**

**WEST VIRGINIA** – Commercial red meat production during April 2000 totaled 500,000 pounds. This was 12 percent below March 2000, but 3 percent above April 1999 production. Commercial red meat production is the carcass weight after slaughter including beef, veal, pork, and lamb and mutton. Individual commodity production is total liveweight of commercial slaughter.

Commercial cattle slaughter totaled 692,000 pounds, down 6 percent from April 1999 production. Cattle slaughter totaled 700 head, down 100 head from the previous year. The average live weight at 992 pounds was up 47 pounds from a year ago.

Commercial hog slaughter totaled 224,000 pounds, down 2 percent from last year. Hog slaughter totaled 700 head, down 100 head from last year. The average live weight at 306 pounds was up 16 pounds from the previous year.

Commercial Sheep and Lamb slaughter was not published to avoid disclosing individual operations.

**UNITED STATES** -- Commercial red meat production totaled 3.46 billion pounds in April, down 9 percent from the 3.82 billion pounds produced in April 1999.

April 1999 contained 22 weekdays and 4 Saturdays. April 2000 contained 20 weekdays and 5 Saturdays.

Beef production, at 2.03 billion pounds, was 6 percent below the previous year. Cattle slaughter totaled 2.78

million head, down 6 percent from 1999. The average live weight was up 1 pound from the previous year, at 1,202 pounds.

Veal production totaled 17.0 million pounds, 6 percent below the previous record low for April set a year ago. Calf slaughter totaled 81,000 head, down 17 percent from April 1999. The average live weight was 40 pounds above last year, at 343 pounds.

Pork production totaled 1.39 billion pounds, down 14 percent from the previous year. Hog slaughter totaled 7.21 million head, 15 percent below 1999. The average live weight was 2 pounds above the previous year, at 262 pounds.

Lamb and mutton production, at 23.0 million pounds, was up 12 percent from April 1999. Sheep slaughter totaled 345,000 head, 12 percent above last year. The average live weight was 136 pounds, unchanged from April a year ago.

January - April red meat production was 15.1 billion pounds, 1 percent lower than the comparable figure a year earlier. Accumulated beef production was 1 percent higher than last year, veal was 1 percent lower, pork was 4 percent lower and lamb & mutton was down 1 percent.

**CHICKENS & EGGS**

**UNITED STATES** –Egg production totaled 7.01 billion during April 2000, up 3 percent from the 6.78 billion produced in 1999. Production included 5.91 billion table eggs and 1.10 billion hatching eggs, of which 1.04 billion were broiler-type and 67.0 million were egg-type. The total number of layers during April 2000 averaged 329 million, up 2 percent from the total average number of layers during April 1999. April egg production per 100 layers was 2,130 eggs, up 1 percent from 2,110 eggs in April 1999.

April 2000 contained 20 weekdays and five Saturdays, compared to 22 weekdays and four Saturdays in April 1999.

All layers in the U.S. on May 1, 2000 totaled 328 million, up 2 percent from a year ago. The 328 million layers consisted of 267 million layers producing table or commercial type eggs, 58.0 million layers producing broiler-type hatching eggs, and 2.94 million layers producing egg-type hatching eggs. Rate of lay per day on May 1, 2000, averaged 70.4 eggs per 100 layers, up 1 percent from the 70.0 a year ago.

Laying flocks in the 30 major egg producing States produced 6.57 billion eggs during April, up 3 percent from April 1999. The average number of layers during April, at 309 million, was up 2 percent from a year earlier.

The 30 major egg producing States are as follows: AL, AR, CA, CO, CT, FL, GA, HI, IL, IN, IA, ME, MD, MI, MN, MS, MO, NE, NY, NC, OH, OK, OR, PA, SC, SD, TX, VA, WA, and WI. These states account for 94 percent of the total U.S. egg production.

#### **Egg-Type Chicks Hatched Down 13 Percent**

Egg-type chicks hatched during April totaled 36.6 million, down 13 percent from April 1999. Eggs in incubators totaled 36.9 million on May 1, 2000, up 5 percent from a year ago.

Domestic placements of egg-type pullet chicks for future hatchery supply flocks by leading breeders totaled 309,000 during April 2000, up 8 percent from April 1999.

#### **Broiler Hatch Up 1 Percent**

The April 2000 hatch of broiler-type chicks, at 744 million, was up 1 percent from April of the previous year. There were 637 million eggs in incubators on May 1, 2000, up slightly from a year earlier.

Leading breeders placed 6.76 million broiler-type pullet chicks for future domestic hatchery supply flocks during April 2000, down 4 percent from April 1999.

### **SHEEP PREDATOR LOSS**

**West Virginia:** A total of 3,600 head of sheep and lambs were lost from animal predators during 1999. This represented 45.0 percent of the 8,000 head of sheep and lambs lost from all causes and resulted in a loss from predators to farmers of \$194,000.

Coyotes were the largest cause of sheep and lamb losses to predators. A total of 2,100 head was lost, accounting for 58.3 percent of the total losses from all animal predators. Dogs were the second largest cause, with 1,100 head, accounting for 30.6 percent of the sheep and lamb losses due to predators.

Fencing, night penning and lamb sheds were the main non-lethal methods used to prevent sheep and lamb losses.

**United States:** Sheep and lamb losses from animal predators in the United States totaled 273,000 during 1999. This represented 36.7 percent of the total losses from all causes and resulted in a loss of \$16.5 million due to predators to farmers and ranchers.

Coyotes caused the majority of sheep and lamb losses to predators. They accounted for 60.7 percent of the total.

Coyotes were also the largest predator of goats in the three major states (AZ, NM, and TX) accounting for 35.6 percent of predator death losses. The value of goats lost from all predators was \$3.4 million.

Farmers and ranchers throughout the United States

spent \$8.8 million on non-lethal methods to prevent predator loss of sheep and lambs. Another \$1.0 million was spent on non-lethal predator controls for goats and kids.

**Survey Procedures:** A random sample of U.S. producers was surveyed to provide data for these estimates. Survey procedures ensured that all sheep producers, regardless of size, had a chance to be included in the survey. Large producers were sampled more heavily than small operations. About 13,800 operators were contacted during the first half of January 2000 by mail, telephone and face-to-face personal interview.

### **JUNE CROP PRODUCTION**

**UNITED STATES -- Winter wheat production** is forecast at 1.62 billion bushels, down 2 percent from the May 1 forecast and 5 percent below 1999. Based on June 1 conditions, the U.S. yield is forecast at 46.7 bushels per acre, down 0.8 bushel from the last forecast. Grain area totals 34.7 million acres, unchanged from May 1.

**Hard Red** production is down 3 percent from a month ago to 944 million bushels. White Winter is up 1 percent from last month. Soft Red is up 1 percent from the last forecast and now totals 448 million bushels.

**Peaches:** The 2000 peach crop in California, Georgia, and South Carolina is forecast at 2.22 billion pounds, up 6 percent from 1999 and 14 percent above two years ago. Freestone peach production is forecast at 1.10 billion pounds, 7 percent above last year and up 23 percent from 1998. Ideal weather conditions in California are responsible for the increase in Freestone production.

The South Carolina peach crop is forecast at 150 million pounds, down 6 percent from last year but up 7 percent from 1998. Fruit count per tree is up, however fruit size is smaller than last year due to lack of rain. Yield could rebound if adequate rainfall is received in the next few weeks.

Georgia's peach crop is forecast at 105 million pounds, down 5 percent from 1999 but up 50 percent from the 1998 freeze and hail-damaged crop. Chill hours were adequate and there were no late freezes. However, dry conditions this Spring have caused fruit size to be small which has diminished production. As of June 4, harvest progress is 24 percent complete. This was ahead of last year's 16 percent harvested but slightly behind the five-year average of 27 percent.

### **NASS MONTHLY AG NEWSLETTER**

**Corn:** The U.S. corn crop is projected at 9.74 billion bushels by the World Agricultural Outlook Board (WAOB), up 3% from last year. The March Prospective Plantings area and a trend yield of 137 bushels per acre are assumed. The trend yield was adjusted for the extremely rapid planting progress and assumes normal weather. Total U.S. 2000/2001 corn supplies are up 3% because of the larger crop. Carryin stocks are little changed from a year earlier. The

projected price range for the 2000 corn crop is \$1.60 to \$2.00 per bushel, compared to \$1.85 to \$1.95 for 1999/2000.

**Soybeans:** The U.S. 2000 soybean production is projected by the WAOB at a record 2.96 billion bushels, up 12% from 1999. U.S. soybean production is based on an intended record large soybean planting of 74.9 million acres and a trend yield of 40 bushels per acre.

Soybean prices are projected at \$4.00 to \$5.00 per bushel, compared with \$4.65 for the 1999/2000 crop. Soybean meal prices are forecast to be between \$145 and \$170 per short ton, compared to \$165 estimated for 1999/2000.

**Cattle:** May 1 cattle on feed in the U.S. feedlots with capacity of 1,000 or more totaled 10.91 million head, up 9% from a year earlier. April placements were down slightly from the previous year. Marketings of fed cattle were 4% below 1999. At mid-May, prices for choice steers (Nebraska direct, 1100-1300 pounds) averaged \$72 per cwt. Feeder steer prices (Oklahoma City, medium-large frame, 750-800 pounds) were around \$84 per cwt in mid-May, unchanged from mid-April.

**Hogs:** During the first three weeks of May, slaughter has been running about 3% below a year ago. Prices at mid-May (Iowa-Southern Minnesota direct, 230-250 pounds) were around \$51 per cwt, unchanged from mid-April. Third quarter prices are expected to average \$48 per cwt.

**Other Livestock:** April milk production was up 3.7% from the previous year. Production per cow increased 3.0%, however, the number of cows was only up 1.0%. **Cheddar cheese prices** (U.S. 40 pound blocks, wholesale) were down the first week of May but up for the second week. During March, total cheese production was 2.6% above the previous year, butter production was down 0.9% and nonfat dry milk production was up 10.8%. April sheep slaughter totaled 345 thousand head, 12% above last year. The average live weight was 136 pounds, unchanged from April a year ago. U.S. table egg production during April 2000 totaled 5.91 billion, up 4% from 1999. Wholesale market eggs prices for the second quarter of 2000 (Grade A Large, New York) are expected to average 55-57 cents per dozen, compared with 58.1 cents a year ago. Third quarter 2000 egg prices are expected to average 58-62 cents per dozen, compared with 66.2 cents a year ago. **Broiler-type** chicks hatched during April 2000 totaled 744 million, up 1% from last year. Cumulative Broiler-Type Placements in 15 selected states for 2000 was 2.78 billion, 1% above a year ago. The wholesale 12 city average price for whole broilers for the second quarter of 2000 is expected to be 55-57 cents, compared to 58.6 cents for the second quarter of last year. Third quarter 2000 broiler prices are expected to average 56-60 cents per pound, compared with the 58.1 cents for a year earlier. Cumulative turkey poult placements for the 2000 marketing year through April, 2000 were 193 million, slightly above the same period a year ago. Placements in April 2000, at 24.9 million, were 7% less than last April. Prices (8-16 lb. Hens, Eastern Region) for the second quarter of 2000 are expected to be in the 67-69 cent range compared with 65.8 cents for the

second quarter last year. Turkey prices for the third quarter of 2000 are expected to average 69-73 cents per pound, compared with the 73.8 cents average for the third quarter of 1999. **Supplies in refrigerated warehouses** at the end of April 2000 compared with a year earlier were: total chicken, up 2%; turkey, down 9; pork, down 16; beef, up 16; frozen orange juice, down 17; butter, down 15, and American cheese up 6%.

## FARM LABOR

**UNITED STATES**--There were 1.05 million hired workers on the Nation's farms and ranches the week of April 9 - 15, 2000, up 2 percent from a year ago. There were 830,000 workers hired directly by farm operators. Agricultural service employees on farms and ranches made up the remaining 217,000 workers. Migrant workers accounted for 8.8 percent of the April hired workforce compared with 8.7 percent last year.

Farm operators paid their hired workers an average wage of \$8.12 per hour during the April 2000 survey week, up 29 cents from a year earlier. Field workers received an average of \$7.58 per hour, up 35 cents from last April. Livestock workers earned \$7.56 per hour compared with \$7.39 a year earlier. The Field and Livestock worker combined wage rate was up 31 cents from last year.

Number of hours worked averaged 40.4 hours for hired workers during the survey week compared with 39.5 hours a year ago.

**APPALACHIAN II REGION** (KY, TN, WV) -- There were 21,000 hired workers on farms and ranches in the Region during the survey week of April 9 - 15, 2000. This compares with 29,000 people during the April 1999 survey week.

Farm operators in the Appalachian II Region paid their hired workers an average wage of \$7.09 per hour during the survey week. This rate is up 37 cents per hour from a year earlier. Field workers received an average of \$6.51 per hour, up 34 cents from the same week in 1999. Livestock workers earned \$6.90 per hour compared with \$6.63 a year earlier.

Number of hours worked averaged 34.4 hours for hired workers during the survey week compared with 32.0 hours a year ago.

## AG CHEMICAL USAGE

**Overview:** The agricultural chemical use estimates in this report refer to on-farm use of commercial fertilizers and pesticides on targeted crops for the 1999 crop year. Farm and ranch operators were enumerated late in the growing season or after the farm operator had indicated that planned applications were completed. The chemical use data were not summarized for geographical areas other than published in this report.

The data were compiled from the Agricultural Resources Management Study (ARMS), conducted primarily during the months of October-December of

1999. Relevant portions of the survey instruments used in data collection are included in the back of this publication.

#### Highlights

**Corn:** Nitrogen was applied to 98 percent of the 1999 corn acreage in the 15 States surveyed: Colorado, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Michigan, Minnesota, Nebraska, North Carolina, Missouri, Ohio, South Dakota, Texas, and Wisconsin. Growers in Kentucky, Michigan, Missouri, Ohio, and Texas reported 100 percent of the acreage treated. Corn growers used an average of 1.7 applications per acre while applying 77 pounds of nitrogen per treatment. In the States surveyed, 82 percent of the planted corn acreage received phosphates, and potash was applied to 67 percent of the acreage.

Herbicides were applied to 98 percent of the corn acreage in 1999. Atrazine was the most commonly used herbicide with 70 percent of the reported acreage being treated. Atrazine was applied at a rate of 1.02 pounds per acre. Metolachlor and Acetochlor were the next two most widely used herbicides and were applied to 29 and 27 percent of the reported acreage, respectively.

In 1999, thirty percent of the corn acreage was treated with insecticides. Chlorpyrifos and Terbufos were the most commonly used insecticides, representing 7.5 million out of the total 10.1 million pounds of insecticide applied in the 15 States surveyed. Chlorpyrifos was applied at the rate of 1.08 pounds per acre and Terbufos was applied at 1.09 pounds per acre.

**Soybeans:** Soybean producers in the 17 States surveyed (Arkansas, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Nebraska, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Dakota, and Tennessee) applied nitrogen fertilizer to 18 percent of the area planted to soybeans. The percent of acres treated ranged from 5 percent in Louisiana to 54 percent in North Carolina. The average number of nitrogen applications per acre was 1.0 with an average application rate of 20 pounds per acre. Phosphate was applied on 26 percent of the soybean planted acreage in the States surveyed. Producers in North Carolina applied phosphates to 71 percent of the soybean acreage, while applications by Minnesota's producers covered only 13 percent of the planted acreage. Potash was applied to 28 percent of the planted soybean acreage in the 17 States surveyed.

In the 17 States surveyed, 96 percent of the soybean acreage was treated with herbicides. The most widely used herbicides were Glyphosate, applied to 62 percent of the soybean acreage, followed by Imazethapyr applied to 16 percent of the acreage. Pendimethalin and Trifluralin were both applied to 14 percent of the soybean acreage.

Soybean growers in the States surveyed applied insecticide to only 2 percent of the soybean acres planted. Of the published States, Louisiana was the largest user of insecticides with 53 percent of the acreage treated. The soybean growers also reported few fungicide or other chemical applications.

**Winter Wheat:** Nitrogen fertilizer was applied to 97 percent of the area planted for 1999 in Indiana. Phosphate fertilizers were applied to 91 percent of the collective acreage. Indiana growers treated 39 percent of the winter wheat acreage with herbicides; 2,4-D was the most prevalent in terms of total amount applied.

#### PUBLISHED MONTHLY

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Livestock Slaughter  
Chicken & Eggs  
Milk Production  
July Crop Production  
Ag Cash Rents  
1999 June Acreage Report